

THE
DRAMATIC CENSOR;
OR,
Weekly Theatrical Report.

NUMBER XVIII.

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 1800.

Let every TRUE-BRITON rest assured, that fairness and plain-dealing will carry a man through life with credit and reputation; that frankness is preferable to disguise, and that those only need the mask of dissimulation, whose actions do not spring from motives pure and unadulterated: those only have recourse to timid caution, or to stratagem, who feel conscious of latent error and misconduct.

The First Volume of the DRAMATIC CENSOR being now completed, the work may be had, either in separate Numbers, or in Sets, half-bound, price Seven Shillings, by applying to the Publishers, J. ROACH, Russel-court, Drury-lane; or C. CHAPPLE, 66, Pall Mall.

DRURY-LANE, TUESDAY, *April 22*, 1800.

PIZARRO—*R. B. Sheridan.* APPRENTICE—*A. Murphy.*

MR. WEWITZER and Mr. HOLLAND severally sustained the parts they undertook on the preceding Saturday, and acquitted themselves in a manner which furnished no reason to regret the change in the representation. The House was, as usual, crowded.

VOL. II.

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COVENT-

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COVENT-GARDEN, TUESDAY, *April 22*, 1800.

GOOD-NATURED MAN—*Dr. Goldsmith.* THE CAMP—
Sheridan. THE HERMIONE.

THIS sprightly and entertaining Comedy was revived this night, from a twelve year's slumber, for the benefit of Mr. MUNDEN, who appeared in Mr. SHUTER's part, as *Croaker*. As our readers will naturally conclude, that the representation of this Play, with respect to the cast of the characters must, in the course of such a long period, have undergone a complete and total revolution, (but *one* of the original Performers being retained) we shall subjoin a list of the *Dramatis Personæ*.

<i>Lofty,</i>	- - - - -	Mr. LEWIS.
<i>Honeywood,</i>	- - - - -	Mr. POPE.
<i>Old Croaker,</i>	- - - - -	Mr. MUNDEN,
<i>Bailiff,</i>	- - . - -	Mr. KNIGHT.
<i>Leontine,</i>	- - - - -	Mr. H. JOHNSTON.
<i>Sir William Honeywood,</i>	-	Mr. MURRAY.
<i>Flanagan,</i>	- - - - -	Mr. EMERY.
<i>Post-boy,</i>	- - - - -	Mr. SIMMONS.
<i>Jarvis,</i>	- - - - -	Mr. THOMPSON.
<i>Butler,</i>	- - . - -	Mr. ABBOTT.
<i>Mrs. Croaker,</i>	- - - - -	Mrs. MATTOCKS.
<i>Olivia,</i>	- - - - -	Miss MURRAY.
<i>Garnet,</i>	- - - - -	Mrs. MILLS.
<i>Miss Richland,</i>	- - - - -	the <i>ci-devant</i> Miss BETTERTON.

The Play was well supported throughout ; and we were highly gratified to see the exertions of this Performer, who, in his public capacity, is a very useful servant to the Theatre, rewarded with such an
overflowing

overflowing house. Various new songs, of the comic kind, were introduced in the course of the Entertainment, which were received with tumultuous applause. Mr. MUNDEN was indefatigable in his zeal to please his patrons, and bore a principal part in each of the three pieces, which constituted the Evening's Bill of Fare.

DRURY-LANE, WEDNESDAY, *April 23*, 1800.

THE WILL—*Reynolds*. OF AGE TO-MORROW.

WE have it on the authority of an old Proverb, that “*'tis an ill wind that blows nobody good.*” The name of Mrs. JORDAN, who was announced in the morning bills, as the representative of *Albina Mandeville*, being withdrawn at a late hour, great numbers who resorted to Drury-Lane this evening, on being apprized of the circumstance, followed that lady's example, and withdrew likewise, to the great loss of the Treasury of this Theatre, but to the equally great gain of that charming Actress, Miss MURRAY, who took her benefit at Covent-Garden. Miss DE CAMP acquitted herself as a very respectable substitute in the character of *Albina*.

COVENT-GARDEN, WEDNESDAY *April 23*, 1800

INKLE AND YARICO—*Colman*. THE CHILD OF NATURE—*Mrs. Inchbald*.

Miss MURRAY, whose growing merit holds out the fairest promise of matured excellence, appeared

this night for the first time (it being her Benefit) in the character of *Yarico*, which she supported with great credit. She was equally happy, as *Amanthis* in the *Entertainment*. The flattering demonstrations she this night received of the public favour and predilection will, doubtless, have the salutary effect to stimulate her to future well-deservings.

The Performances closed with a Grand Historical Spectacle, called *The Soldier's Festival; or, The Night before the Battle*, (the night after a successful engagement would, perhaps, have been a more appropriate season for festivity, and have corresponded better with the concluding scene) in which, by way of *finale*, to heighten the zest of enjoyment, was given a representation of the Death of General Wolfe!

DRURY-LANE, THURSDAY, April 24, 1800.

PIZARRO—*Sheridan*. THE WEDDING DAY—*Mrs. Inchbald*.

Mr. WEWITZER undertook Mr. KING's part, as *Sir Adam*, in the *Entertainment*. This Performer seldom errs in his conception of the character he sustains. Mrs. JORDAN was loudly and deservedly *encored* in her beautiful little ballad—"In the dead of the night"—and, indeed, to speak in general terms, we never saw her act with more vivacity and *naivete*. It is to her performance, that the *Wedding Day* stands indebted for its toleration. As a Dramatic composition, it is a very despicable production.

COVENT.

COVENT-GARDEN, THURSDAY, *April* 24, 1800.

SECRETS WORTH KNOWING—*Morton*. LOCK AND
KEY—*P. Hoare*.

IF Mr. MORTON offends our judgment by the inconsistency of his plot, and that want of regular developement, which characterizes his productions, he amply compensates for this defect by the rich meriment his dramas afford. *Rostrum* is a truly laughable and sprightly character, (however exaggerated and overcharged the colouring) to which Mr. LEWIS does consummate justice: in any other hands it would lose its whole effect. *Egerton* is a declamatory part, well calculated for the sonorous voice, the *os rotundum* of Mr. HOLMAN, who appeared to considerable advantage in the scene, where he relates his calamitous history to his supposed guilty sister, *Mrs. Greville*. Long practice, we fear, has rendered Mr. POPE's *whining habit* too inveterate, to leave any rational hope of amendment. Could this gentleman succeed in giving a more dignified tone to sorrow, than the puling accents of a school-boy, smarting under the pangs of recent castigation, he would claim some merit in scenes of pathos and sensibility. *April* is a part, in which we must confess ourselves much pleased with Mr. FAWCETT's performance. It is in a similar line of acting with his *Frank Oatlands*, in the *Cure for the Heart-Ache*, and *Jack Junk*, in the *Birth-day*; characters which, in
our

our opinion, rank among Mr. FAWCETT's best parts. Mr. KNIGHT's *Plethora* proves him possessed of great versatility of talent. Though himself a *young Performer*, *Old Men* are Mr. EMERY's peculiar walk. Mr. MUNDEN acquitted himself with his usual success, as *Undermine*.

Sally Downright, no doubt, was intended by the Author for the portrait of a blunt, honest, and faithful domestic; but we may be allowed to doubt, whether Mr. MORTON meant to give her such a large portion of flippancy and impertinence, as Mrs. MATTOCKS throws into her performance, and which greatly detract from the merit of her character. Mrs. POPE personated *Mrs. Greville*; and Mrs. LITCHFIELD was the representative of *Rose Sydney*.

In the Entertainment, the chief interest rests with MUNDEN and FAWCETT, in the ludicrous characters of *Brummagem* and *Ralph*. The Royal Family, who visited the Theatre this evening, were highly diverted with the whimsicalities both of the Play and the After-piece.

DRURY-LANE, FRIDAY, *April 25*, 1800.

CASTLE-SPECTRE—*M. G. Lewis*. NO SONG, NO SUPPER—*P. Hoare*.

Mr. SURMONT sustained the part of *Earl Percy* in the Play, Mr. C. KEMBLE being still prevented, by indisposition, from discharging his professional duties.

COVENT-

COVENT-GARDEN, FRIDAY, *April 25*, 1800.
SPEED THE PLOUGH—*Merton*. OSCAR AND MAL-
VINA—*Byrn*.

DRURY-LANE, SATURDAY, *April 26*, 1800.
PIZARRO—*Sheridan*. VIRGIN UNMASKED—*H. Fielding*.

COVENT-GARDEN, SATURDAY, *April 26*, 1800.
HEIR AT LAW—*Colman*. CASTLE OF SORRENTO.

THE Play, as well as the Entertainment, are the property of the Haymarket Theatre, but were performed this night at Covent-Garden, by permission, for the benefit of Mr. FAWCETT. Most of the characters retain the same cast at both Theatres; and, where a change takes place in the representation, the advantage lies avowedly, on the general result, with Covent-Garden. Mr. EMERY is a better representative of *Daniel Dowlas* than Mr. SUETT; and the easy gaiety of KNIGHT forms a pleasing contrast to the heavy formal stiffness of BARRY-MORE. Mr. MURRAY as *Stedfast*; Mr. H. JOHNSTON as *Henry Morland*; and Miss MURRAY as *Caroline Dormer*, are much upon a *par* with the original representatives, Mr. AICKIN, Mr. C. KEMBLE, and Miss DE CAMP. Mrs. GIBBS (for that night only) made her appearance at this Theatre, as *Cicely Homespun*; a character in which she has acquired such universal and such merited applause, by the simplicity

simplicity and *naivete* of her manner, that it would be a hazardous enterprize for any Actress to take the part out of her hands, with such a strong current of popular prejudice in favour of Mrs. GIBBS.

An *ephemeral* Interlude followed between the Play and the Entertainment, called *The Social Songsters*, in which a variety of favourite songs were introduced. The Theatre was crowded to its utmost capacity.

DRURY-LANE, MONDAY, *April 28*, 1800.

SHE WOULD, AND SHE WOULD NOT—*C. Cibber*. THE CHILDREN, *or* GIVE THEM THEIR WAY—*P. Hoare*. SYLVESTER DAGGERWOOD—*Colman*.

THE partiality of the Public to *caricature-actors*, to *buffoonery* and *mimicry*, in preference to *chaste* performance and genuine dramatic merit, affords a strong and lamentable proof of the depraved taste of the Town; and the overflowing houses, which these *caricaturists* draw, affords a proof equally strong and incontrovertible, that this preference for buffoonery actually does exist. We mean not to apply this remark *individually*, but in a *general* point of view, as the encouragement given to *caricature* tends to remove the restoration of legitimate drama to a still greater and more hopeless distance.

Mr. WEWITZER sustained the part of *Don Manuel*, for the *first* time; Mr. BARRYMORE personated *Don Philip*; Mr. HOLLAND, *Octavio*; Mr. BANNISTER (the *young*) appeared as *Trappanti*; Mr. WA-

THEN,

THEN, as *Soto* ; Mr. SURMONT, as *Don Lewis* ; and Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH, as *Diego*.

Hippolita was admirably performed by Mrs. JORDAN : Miss POPE and Miss DE CAMP exerted themselves with their accustomed success in their respective characters, as *Violetta* and *Flora* ; and Miss HEARD acquitted herself with credit, as *Rosara*.

A new Comic Drama, in two acts, entitled *The Children, or Give them their Way*, succeeded to the Play, of which Mr. HOARE is understood to be the Author. It is with unfeigned regret we hear this gentleman's name brought forward on this occasion, as Mr. HOARE has approved himself possessed of no mean literary merit : he has written several pieces, which are entitled to considerable approbation, and do credit to his pen. As there is little reason to believe that this Comic Drama will be often repeated, we shall decline entering into an *analysis*, and content ourselves with subjoining a list of the *Dramatis Personæ*, as explanatory of the Play-bill.

Sir Gabriel Willwoud, - - - Mr. SUETT.

Henry Willwoud, - - - Mr. BANNISTER (the young).

Robert, - - - - - Mr. PALMER.

Sod, - - - - - Mr. WEWITZER.

Plough, - - - - - Mr. MADDOCKS.

Till, - - - - - Mr. SPARKS.

Servants, Villagers, &c.

Emily, - - - - - Mrs. JORDAN.

Rose, - - - - - Miss DE CAMP.

The Author has not been sparing of his songs; but there is not one among the list that boasts the slightest pretensions to poetical excellence: and, to preserve the merit of consistence, the music nearly comes under the same description as the poetry; though, if there be any distinction, it certainly inclines in favour of the strains of the composer. This dramatic abortion was ushered in by a prologue, introductory of a new song, called *The Origin of Old Batchelors*, which being “said, or sung” (as the bills expressly announced) by Mr. BANNISTER, (the young) had the honour of being *encored*.

Sylvester Daggerwood, with the incorporation of a contemptible ballad, entitled *The Lord-Mayor’s Show, or Four-and-Twenty Aldermen all on a Row*, terminated the evening’s *mummary*, of which Mr. BANNISTER, as he monopolized the profits, bore the principal brunt. He was, in very truth, the hero of the night.

COVENT-GARDEN, MONDAY, April 28, 1800.

SPEED THE PLOUGH—*Morton*. RAYMOND AND
AGNES—*Byrn*.

DRURY-LANE, TUESDAY, April 29, 1800.

DE MONTFORT—*Adapted for scenic representation, by J. P. Kemble*. THE PURSE.

The sanction of KEMBLE’s *fosterage* to a Tragedy, which had already acquired no inconsiderable degree of celebrity among the fashionable circles, in
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its *pristine* state, by the circumstances (involving an air of mystery) under which it was originally produced, naturally wound up public expectation to its highest pitch, and rendered the Lovers of the Drama eager to witness the result of this combination of talent, on the part of the writer, and the adapter of the Play.

The literary reader scarcely need to be informed, that the *printed* Tragedy, on which Mr. KEMBLE has employed his practical skill in scenic representation, is one of a series of Plays, illustrative of the passions, published without the name of the author, but tacitly acknowledged to be the production of a female writer, and generally attributed to the pen of Mrs. HUNTER, the widow of the late celebrated anatomist. This report has recently been contradicted, and the Play in question is now referred to Miss BAILEY, sister to the physician of that name; Mrs. HUNTER, who originally suffered herself to act as a screen to her friend, generously disdaining, after the success the Play experienced in the closet, to imitate the *jack-daw* in the fable, by placing to her own account the merit due to another.

Hence it appears, that to appreciate the merits of the new Tragedy, as a dramatic composition, and to award a righteous verdict on the respective claims of both parties concerned in its production, it is essentially necessary to compare the Play, as now *acted* (with Mr. KEMBLE's alterations) at Drury-Lane, with the original, as *written* by Miss BAILEY.

With this view, we have endeavoured to procure the printed copy, but have not been successful in our attempt, the Play, it seems, being out of print. We hope, however, in the course of the ensuing week to obviate this difficulty, and to be enabled to bring the Tragedy to the test of fair criticism, with respect to the individual merit or demerit of the author and the adapter; and shall, therefore, postpone till next week that thorough investigation and *analysis*, which, but for the reasons already assigned, we should now enter upon. Mean while, it may not be unacceptable to our readers to be put in possession of a short historical sketch of the plot, which we shall, according to our wonted custom, preface with that necessary article of intelligence, a list of the **Dramatis Personæ*.

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* As we conceive that the printed Play Bills, distributed about the town, and sold at the doors of the Theatre, were originally intended for the information of those who frequent dramatic performances, we are not a little puzzled to account, on any rational principle, for the custom which at present obtains, of omitting a specification of the *cast* of the characters, on those nights when such a specification is *most wanted*; to wit, on the representation of a *New Play*, and during the whole of the remainder of the season, in which such Play is *first* produced. After the lapse of a year, indeed, when the whole town is in possession of the necessary information, and when, of course, that information is rendered less important and desirable, the bills contain a minute detail of particulars, which are no longer essential to the perfect understanding of the Play. We would wish to call the attention of Managers to this circumstance, and recommend to them to consider, whether they
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<i>De Montfort</i> ,	- - - -	Mr. KEMBLE.
<i>Marquis Rasenfeld</i> ,	- - -	Mr. TALBOT.
<i>Count Albert</i> ,	- - - -	Mr. BARRYMORE.
<i>Manuel</i> ,	- - - - -	Mr. POWELL.
<i>Jerome</i> ,	- - - - -	Mr. DOWTON.
<i>Conrad</i> ,	- - - - -	Mr. CAULFIELD.
<i>Jane de Montfort</i> ,	- - -	Mrs. SIDDONS.
<i>Countess Albert</i> ,	- - - -	Miss HEARD.
<i>Maid</i> ,	- - - - -	Miss TIDSWELL.
<i>Abbess</i> ,	- - - - -	Mrs. CROUCH.
<i>Nuns</i> ,	- - - - {	Miss DE CAMP, Miss STEVENS, &c.

The scene is laid in Augsburg and its vicinity, to which city *De Montford* retreats from Vienna, for the purpose of avoiding *Rasenfeld*, a nobleman against whom, from childhood, he had conceived an invincible aversion, which had increased to such an ungovernable pitch, as to bring on a personal encounter between them, in which *Rasenfeld* proved victorious, but generously spared the life of his adversary. Unforeseen circumstances, connected with

can advance any better plea, in favour of the continuance of this custom, than *precedent*—a plea which, but too often, both in church and state; in law and gospel; in politics and in ethics, usurps the place of reason and good sense. If the Managers choose to resort to *mystery*, in justification of this custom, and alledge that a Play becomes interesting in proportion as it is incomprehensible and obscure, even this plea is abrogated by the practice now in vogue, of prefixing an explanatory list of the *Dramatis Personæ* to the printed copy of the songs of all musical pieces brought forward at the Theatres. Why *prose-dialogue* should not be entitled to the same privileges and advantages as *sing-song*, we must confess ourselves utterly at a loss to ascertain.

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the death of a relation who bequeaths his possessions to *Rasenfeld*, demand the presence of that nobleman, at the very place whither his antagonist had retired to avoid him. *De Montfort's* sister, *Jane*, likewise repairs to Augsburg, in search of her brother; and, through her interposition, a reconciliation is effected between the two rivals. *De Montfort's* hatred, however, has taken too deep root to be entirely eradicated: like a half-surpressed fire, it is rather smothered than extinguished, and needs but the smallest provocative to burst forth afresh into full blaze. Occasion is not long wanting. An artful intriguer, of the name of *Conrad*, who has a favour to solicit of *De Montfort*, resuscitates the latent spark, and adds fuel to the flame, by intimating that a reciprocal passion subsists between the Lady *Jane* and *Rasenfeld*. This intelligence rouses the vindictive passions of *De Montfort*, and rekindles his hatred to his rival with aggravated violence. He challenges *Rasenfeld* to personal combat, and loads him with the most opprobrious invectives; but *Rasenfeld* declines the contest, accompanying his refusal with bitter taunts, which still more incense his enemy. *De Montfort* now resolves upon accomplishing his revenge by assassination; and, learning that *Rasenfeld* sets out in the evening on foot, and unattended, on a visit to a friend some miles distant, he waylays his adversary, and murders him in a wood. The screams of the unhappy victim are heard by one of the nuns in a neighbouring convent

vent, who gives the alarm, and immediate search being made, *Rasensfeld* is discovered weltering in his blood: the murderer is secured, and brought a prisoner to the convent, to which place the dead body is likewise conveyed. Lady *Jane* having received some distant intimation of her brother's *route*, and apprehending disastrous consequences, follows him, accompanied by *Albert*, to prevent the mischief of which she has a secret *presentiment*. She arrives at the convent nearly at the same time that her brother is taken into custody. An agonizing interview takes place between *De Montfort* and his sister; after which, the murderer escapes the legal punishment of his crime, by very opportunely dying of a broken heart; and his sister, disgusted with the world, takes the veil.

Such are the outlines of the plot on which the New Tragedy is constructed; but which we, for the present, forbear to criticise, till we have an opportunity of forming a comparative estimate of the relative claims of both parties—*the original author, and the adapter*. Mean while, we shall content ourselves with generally observing, that the success of the Play depends more, in our humble opinion, in the exquisite acting of Mr. KEMBLE and Mrs. SIDDONS, than on its own intrinsic merit. The language is, indeed, chaste and elegant; the diction elevated and impressive, without becoming turgid, vapid, and bombastic; and the sentiments are delicate and natural. But the Piece wants interest—it wants variety

variety—it wants activity—it is too barren of incident—and very little art has been employed in the conduct of the plot. It is, likewise, independant of these negative disqualifications, liable to stronger objections, in a moral and dramatic light, than any Theatrical production we have of late witnessed. These objections, we fear, are inherent, constitutionally inherent to the Piece, and therefore irremediable. This consideration causes us more deeply to regret, that men with Mr. KEMBLE's powers, should employ their talents upon improving the crude conceptions of others, instead of trusting to the resources of their own minds, and drawing upon the stable bank of their own genius. It is not in the nature of things for discordant elements to assimilate: a drama, constructed on this principle of *participation*, seldom exhibits the appearance of a perfect *whole*: it seldom discovers *unity* of design or execution; but, with very few exceptions, betrays its *double* parentage.

N. B. Our remarks on the performers are, together with our *Analysis* of the New Tragedy, reserved for next week.

COVENT-GARDEN, TUESDAY, *April* 29, 1800.

DOUGLAS—*J. Home*. LOVERS QUARRELS—*Altered from Vanburgh's Mistakes*. THE DESERTER OF NAPLES.

OUR irritable correspondent, Mr. PARIS, who accuses us of three unpardonable and mortal sins,
(*viz.*

(viz.—1st. the *invasion of the Royal prerogative*, by speaking in the *plural* number!—2dly, of *witchcraft and magic*, because we visit *both* Theatres in the course of *one* night!—and, 3dly, of a *belief in the infallibility of KEMBLE*!) will find, from the confession we now make, that, as little as we possess, as little do we arrogate to ourselves, the faculty of *ubiquity and omni-presence*. Be it known then, to Mr. PARIS, that this evening we did *not* pay our customary visit to Covent-Garden Theatre, being busily engaged at Drury-Lane, in witnessing the first representation of the new Tragedy of *De Montfort*. As, therefore, we make it a practice not to *criticise* what we have not *seen*, we shall confine our remarks on the performances of the night, which were for the benefit of Mr. and Mrs. H. JOHNSTON, to a specification of the *cast* of the characters.

Douglas, - - - - - Mr. H. JOHNSTON.

Lord Randolph (for that night only) - Mr. BETTERTON.

Glenalvon, { (by permission of the Pro- } Mr. RAIMOND.
 { prietors of Drury Lane) }

Officer, - - - - - Mr. THOMPSON.

Old Norval, } (being their first ap- } Mr. MURRAY.
 { pearance in those } Miss MILLS.

Anna, }
Lady Randolph, } Characters) Mrs. ST. LEDGER.

In the after-piece of *Lovers Quarrels* (a two-act Comedy, not acted before these two years), Mrs. H. JOHNSTON sustained, for the first time, the part of *Jacintha*. In the *Deserter of Naples*, which has lain dormant for ten years, Mr. JOHNSTON played,

(for that night only,) the part of *Henry*; and Mrs. JOHNSTON appeared (for the first time in that character) as the representative of *Louisa*.

DRURY-LANE, WEDNESDAY, *April 30*, 1800.

DE MONTFORT—*Adapted for the Stage by Mr. Kemble.*

DEVIL TO PAY—*C. Coffey.*

THE new Tragedy experienced considerable curtailment on the second representation, the leading features of which we shall detail in our next. We were particularly pleased with the omission of the scene which ushered in the fourth act, in which a new performer, under the title of a *screech-owl*, bore a principal part. But the piece is still much too long, and would receive great additional improvement by totally rescinding the part of *Conrad*, who is only an incumbrance to the Play. Various other alterations are necessary to take off the heaviness of the Tragedy, by shortening the term of its duration.

COVENT-GARDEN, WEDNESDAY, *April 30*.

THE RAGE—*Reynolds.* THE CRITIC—*R. B. Sheridan.*

Mr. KNIGHT performed this evening the part of *Gingham*, for his own benefit, in the Play, and appeared as the representative of *Puff*, in the Entertainment.

DRURY-

DRURY-LANE, THURSDAY, May 1, 1800.

WHEEL OF FORTUNE—*Cumberland.* WHO'S THE
DUPE?—*Mrs. Cowley.*

It yields us unfeigned satisfaction to see the Theatre emancipated from invidious party distinctions. The Royal Family now alternate their visits to both houses with impartial regularity, and in both are received with the most cordial and unequivocal demonstrations of loyalty, on the part of the audience.

The *Wheel of Fortune* ranks high in our estimation in the list of modern dramatic productions. *Penruddock* is a bold, well-drawn character, to which the masterly acting of Mr. KEMBLE gives full colouring and effect.

The Farce, which abounds in broad humour, affords SUETT free scope for the indulgence of his natural bias to drollery and caricature.

COVENT-GARDEN, THURSDAY, May 1, 1800.

THE MISER—*H. Fielding.* PAUL AND VIRGINIA—
Cobb. RAYMOND AND AGNES—*Byrn.*

MR. EMERY'S performance of *Lovegold*, in the Comedy, entitles him to considerable commendation. Mrs. MATTOCKS acted the part of *Lappett* with spirit and address.

The new Musical Drama of *Paul and Virginia*, which was performed this evening for the first time, is founded on St. PIERRE'S popular Tale under that title. But the Opera-monger, who has undertaken

the task of adapting it to the Stage, has stripped it of all its native beauties, and so disguised, mutilated and deformed the work, that it is scarcely capable of being recognized. It is, in fact, brought down to the level of Bartholomew fair, and only calculated to please children, or old men and women in a state of second dotage, who are willing to compromise sense and rationality for a silly dance, and the charms of sing-song.

Mr. COBB has improved the dramatic effect, by departing from his Author in the catastrophe. *Virginia* does not perish, but is rescued by her lover, assisted by *Alambra*, a negro slave, whose pardon she had obtained from his master, from whose service *Alambra* had deserted.

It is our intention to enter more minutely into the merits of this production in our next. For the present, therefore, we shall content ourselves with observing, that it has proved the vehicle of introduction to some very charming strains by Mr. MAZZINGHI, as likewise some pleasing songs, composed by Mr. REEVE. Mr. INCLEDON has an incomparably sweet Air in the First Act; the Music by Mr. MAZZINGHI—"Boldly I come to plead the cause," &c.—which he gave in the very first style of excellence. We need not add, that he was loudly *encored*. It were to be wished, that the *dialogue* were more worthy of the liberality of the Managers, the skill of the author's musical colleagues, and the taste of the artists, who have furnished the scenic embellishments.

FINE

FINE ARTS, &c.*

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EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,  
FOR THE YEAR 1800.

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FOR some years past, we have been in the habit of watching the progress of the ARTS in this country, with more than ordinary attention; and, in this view, have naturally directed our notice to the annual Exhibitions of the Royal Academy, as the surest test of the actual state of that Art which now more peculiarly forms the object of our present Strictures. From the large collection of works on this occasion, brought before the public eye—from the number of Exhibiting Artists—the respectability of the establishment, under the sanction of which that assemblage is formed—the reputed eminence of the individuals (all of them R. A's, and of course supposed to have attained to the pinnacle of fame and professional excellence) who have the whole and sole control of the institution; from whose body the *Council* is elected; with whom rests the prerogative of *rejection* or *admission*; of whom the *Hanging Committee* is composed, who have in

* The intimate and indissoluble connexion which subsists between the Fine Arts in general, and particularly between Poetry and Painting, which, for that reason, are denominated *Sister Arts*, together with the immediate reference, which this latter branch of the Fine Arts has to the Stage, will, it is presumed, fully justify us in the eyes of our readers (were justification necessary) for devoting a proportion of our work to a disquisition into the state, the progress, and improvement of an Art, which so essentially contributes to enhance the attractions of scenic representations.

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their hands (metaphorically speaking) the power of *life* or *death*, as they can display a picture to *advantage* or *disadvantage*, even as a potter can fabricate his vessels, either for the purposes of *honour*, or of *dishonour*—from all these causes, separately and collectively considered, we were justly led to conclude, that the *Exhibition of the Royal Academy*, thus constituted, and thus circumstanced, must not only concentrate, as into one common focus, the aggregate talents of the whole body of Artists, but likewise give a prevalent bias and direction to the exertions of individuals, and excite that spirit of emulation and competition, which leads to excellence, to honour, and to fame.

But when we entered the rooms, big with the most flattering expectations, we found ourselves in the exact predicament of the Apostle: "At a distance, we thought these men to be something, but, when we came to Jerusalem, we found them to be nothing!" We found that, like the generality of *Theorists*, we had been indulging chimerical hopes, and golden visions, which had no reality in nature. We found a well-stocked catalogue, and rooms hung from top to bottom with pictures of all sorts and sizes; but we found no evidence of practical good effect resulting from the institution. We were sufficiently read in the experience of human nature to know, that *face-makers*, *screen-painters*, *consumers of oil, canvas, and red lead*, would multiply of themselves, like all other trades, and overstock the market, without the help of a *public hot-bed* to quicken and promote their growth. We were
aware,

aware, that *individual exertion*, in this line, would increase in exact proportion to the measure of *individual want*; and that Nature, in this respect, had superseded the necessity of a ROYAL INSTITUTION, by furnishing men with that grand principle of human action, the

Ingeniū largitor VENTER!

It appeared therefore to us, and we availed ourselves of opportunities of publicly avowing our sentiments on this head, that Artists acted precisely on the same principles, and pursued the same line of conduct, since the establishment of the ROYAL ACADEMY, as they did prior to that event. In reply, it was alledged, that "Painters were men, like the rest of their fellow-creatures; that they must eat and drink—that they could not *live, to paint*, without first *painting, to live!*" This proposition was certainly clear and self-evident; it was, in every sense of the definition, *an axiom*. But this *axiom*, instead of silencing our doubts, led enquiry into a new train of thought. We now began seriously to debate the question: Whether the ROYAL INSTITUTION had any determinate object, referable to the profession at large? or, Whether it was merely intended as a snug *sinecure* for certain lucky individuals—as a kind of *hospital*, not for *decayed* and *incapacitated* Artists, but for men in the *zenith of success*—as a *hive of sweets*, not for the exigencies of the needy industrious Artist in the *winter* of his days, but for the luxury of the favourites of Fortune, who wish to commence *drones*, and bask in the *summer-sunshine* of a meridian sky?

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It was impossible to suppose the latter case, as far as the question involved the *original intention* of the institution, though *fact* and *practice* certainly decided in its favour: nay, we might go a step farther, and add, though fact and practice clearly demonstrated that the ROYAL ACADEMY, as at present constituted, and as at present operative, was rather productive of *detrimental*, than of *beneficial* consequences, with respect to the state, progress, and the improvement of the Arts. The only alternative, therefore, left us was, to conclude that some latent source of perversion and abuse defeated the original hopes, the views and motives of the founders of the establishment: that, what was intended for a *public good*, had been misapplied to the purposes of *individual interest*; what had been originally instituted for *national benefit*, for *honour* (for on no other grounds, are we persuaded, would the MONARCH have sanctioned the establishment with his countenance) had been artfully turned aside from that magnanimous design, to promote the *aggrandizement of a cabal*, who, once appointed, are ever after *self-elective*! Grating as the position may sound, the result of our enquiries—enquiries not commenced under the influence of prejudice, not rashly, hastily, precipitately pursued—led us to a conviction, that the weight of the institution, the funds of the institution, and its great annual revenue had been totally misapplied: we will not say *intentionally*, but, probably, for want of *better judgment*, to purposes diametrically foreign and inimical to the motives which prompted its establishment.

(To be continued.)